

Fort George G. Meade

EPA Region 3

Maryland

Anne Arundel County 2nd Congressional District

EPA ID# MD9210020567

Last Update: June 2002

Other Names: None

Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deleted the Tipton Airfield parcel of the Ft. Meade Site in November 1999 from the National Priorities List. Anne Arundel County will run the Tipton Air Field as a county airport. The first (ROD) for the Tipton Air Field parcel was signed on December 30, 1998. All field work was completed on February 28, 1999 for the final Tipton ROD, which was signed in June 1999. The facility is scheduled to begin long-term monitoring of the Tipton area groundwater in June 2001. The partnering team is in the process of reviewing the cleanup alternatives for the Post Laundry facility. A ROD for this site is scheduled to be signed in November 2001. The facility is in the process of drafting a site management plan and is planning to negotiate a Federal Facilities agreement with EPA by December 2001.

Site Description

Fort George G. Meade (FGGM) has been a permanent U.S. Army installation since 1917, and once occupied approximately 13,500 acres of land in northwestern Anne Arundel County, Maryland, along the Little Patuxent and Patuxent Rivers, midway between Baltimore, MD and Washington, D.C. The community of Odenton, Maryland borders the eastern edge of FGGM. FGGM's current mission is to provide a wide range of support to 114 tenant organizations from all four services, as well as several federal agencies. Major tenants include the National Security Agency, the Defense Information School and the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command. The population of FGGM includes approximately 8,000 military personnel, 25,000 civilian employees and 5,700 family members of military personnel. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed FGGM to the National Priorities List (NPL) based on the evaluation of four sites (contaminant sources) identified as past storage and disposal areas for materials and wastes that contained hazardous substances. These sites are the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO), Active Sanitary Landfill (ASL), Clean Fill Dump (CFD) and Post Laundry Facility (PLF). Contaminants at one (or more) of the source areas include solvents, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), heavy metals, waste fuels and waste oils. The actual "NPL site" corresponds to the extent of contamination throughout the Base, and possibly off base, if information indicates Ft. Meade was the source, and would not necessarily be limited to the four contaminant sources described above. The NPL listing includes both Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and non-BRAC portions of FGGM. The formal comment period for NPL proposal concluded on June 2, 1997, and was placed on the NPL on July 28, 1998. Under the BRAC Act of 1988, an estimated 8,848 acres of FGGM were originally targeted for closure. To date, 8,100 acres of the original BRAC property have been transferred to the Department of Interior's Patuxent National Research Refuge (PNRR) for use as a wildlife refuge. This property transfer occurred on two separate occasions in October, 1991, (7,600 acres) and January, 1993 (500 acres), as part of Defense Appropriation Bills for FY 1991 and FY 1992, respectively. Currently there are 18 operable units identified on the DOI property which require further environmental action. The U.S. Army has retained ownership of the ASL, which encompasses approximately 308 acres of former BRAC property. The remaining 366 acres of BRAC property, which consists of the inactive 366-acre Tipton Army Airfield

(TAA) parcel, although still owned by the U.S. Army, is scheduled for eventual transfer to Anne Arundel County for use as a General Aviation Facility.

Site Responsibility

Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the U.S. Army, and the Federal and State governments.

NPL Listing History

This site was proposed to the National Priorities List of the most serious uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites requiring long term remedial action on April 1, 1997. The site was formally added to the list July 28, 1998.

Threats and Contaminants

Elevated levels of various volatile organic compounds (VOCs), pesticides and explosives compounds have been detected on-post in the Upper and Lower Patapsco aquifers, both of which are used as domestic water sources by residents who live to the east of FGGM. The water supply for FGGM is obtained from wells installed in the deeper Patuxent aquifer. Low levels of trichloroethylene (TCE), tetrachloroethylene (PCE), other VOCs, atrazine and certain pesticides, have been detected in residential wells located in Odenton, Maryland. To date, ground water samples have been collected at 25 residential wells and one commercial well. TCE, PCE and/or atrazine are present in some residential wells at levels above respective federal Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). TCE and PCE are chlorinated solvents that were typically used in the past for degreasing, parts cleaning and other industrial activities. Atrazine is an herbicide that is commonly applied for agricultural purposes. EPA Region III and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) are continuing to investigate potential sources of off-post ground water contamination. VOCs, pesticides, explosive compounds and PCBs have also been detected in the Patuxent River watershed, which includes tributaries to the Patuxent River and associated wetlands. Finally, numerous unexploded ordnance (UXO) have been discovered throughout former range training areas at FGGM, including a portion of the Little Patuxent River.

Cleanup Progress

Environmental cleanups at FGGM use a combination of “removal actions,” which are intended to quickly reduce immediate threats to human health and the environment posed by contaminants, and “remedial actions,” which provide for permanent cleanup of contamination that poses long-term risks to human health and the environment.

In order to more effectively manage investigations and cleanups at FGGM, the U.S. Army, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and EPA Region III [the ‘Team’] have defined separate Operable Units (OUs) that include various contaminated sites and areas of potential environmental concern. The Team has also developed target schedules for investigations and cleanups at these OUs. As more information becomes available regarding the nature/extent of contamination at FGGM, the Team will create additional OUs and/or revise existing schedules accordingly. A total of nine off-base residences, including all residences where TCE, PCE, and/or atrazine had been detected above federal MCLs, are hooked up to the county water supply system. Another five residences are being provided bottled water by MDE.

The U.S. Army has completed removal actions (excavation/off-site disposal of drums and surrounding contaminated soil) at the DRMO site, an emergency removal of UXO from a portion of the Little Patuxent River and three UXO surveys, which included removal of detected UXO, throughout the TAA parcel and PNNR. The U.S. Army completed removal actions (UXO clearance activities) on the TAA parcel, with the first ROD signed on 12/31/98 and the final ROD for this OU expected by 7/99. They are currently performing environmental investigations and studies at eighteen sites located within BRAC property. The U.S. Army is also performing environmental investigations at three non-BRAC sites (ASL, DRMO and PLF). To date, remedial investigations have commenced at over eleven sites, with additional environmental studies planned at both BRAC and non-BRAC areas of potential environmental concern. Several additional removal actions, Records of Decision (RODs), and remedial actions are planned within the next few years. Recently, the U.S. Army leased the TAA parcel to Anne Arundel County to allow the county to initiate General Aviation Facility operations. Transfer of the entire TAA parcel to the county is anticipated to occur within the next couple of months. Finally, in an

effort to fulfill its obligations under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the U.S. Army has identified Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) and Areas of Concern (AOCs) on non-BRAC portions of FGGM.

The Department of Defense (DOD) has been delegated the authority to conduct investigations and cleanups under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (CERCLA), commonly known as “Superfund.” In the case of FGGM, the U.S. Army is conducting environmental investigations and cleanups under DOD’s Installation Restoration Program using Defense Environmental Restoration Account (DERA) funds and under the BRAC Program using BRAC funds. In the case of CERCLA activities at FGGM, the U.S. Army is the “lead agency” responsible for funding and performing investigations and cleanups under the oversight of EPA Region III and MDE. In addition to CERCLA requirements, FGGM is also subject to RCRA Corrective Action requirements. EPA Region III is responsible for identifying all SWMUs and AOCs on FGGM and ensuring that the U.S. Army satisfies Corrective Action requirements, which involve contaminants similar (or identical) to those addressed under Superfund. RCRA regulations provide another mechanism to ensure that environmental investigations and cleanups are completed at FGGM. These response actions, in addition to cleanups already completed, will continue to reduce the threat of exposure to contaminants at FGGM.

Contacts

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The detailed Administrative Record can be examined at the following locations:

FGGM Environmental Management Office Buildings
T-239 and T-249
Fort Meade, MD 20755

Provinces Public Library
Severn Square Shopping Center
Severn, MD 21144